

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

**FISCAL YEAR 1997 REPORT:
EPA'S COUNTER-TERRORISM ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**CHEMICAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & PREVENTION OFFICE
OFFICE OF SOLID WASTE & EMERGENCY RESPONSE
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
EPA Counter-Terrorism Activities
Fiscal Year 1997

As a result of several recent terrorist incidents, including the Sarin gas incident in Tokyo and the bombing of the Murrah building in Oklahoma City in 1995, federal attention and resources dedicated to counter-terrorism (CT) have grown significantly; Congress and the White House have responded with additional legislation and allocation of responsibility.

- ◆ Presidential Decision Directive (PDD)/National Security Council #39 assigned numerous specific responsibilities to various federal agencies, including EPA. PDD #39 assigned lead responsibility to the FBI for crisis management and to FEMA for consequence management in incidents of terrorism.
- ◆ Nunn-Lugar-Domenici (NLD) legislation provided significant funding and tasking, primarily to DOD, to assist state and local responders in becoming better prepared to deal with potential terrorist incidents involving nuclear, biological, or chemical (NBC) weapons of mass destruction (WMD). EPA is one of six key agencies carrying out these tasks.

To meet the new requirements of PDD #39 and NLD legislation, EPA's CT program is focused on leveraging existing mechanisms from within the Agency's emergency preparedness, response, and prevention programs. EPA's efforts have focused primarily on the areas of:

- ◆ Program Development and Guidance;
- ◆ Interagency and Intra-Agency Coordination; and
- ◆ Training and Exercises.

This report discusses in detail Fiscal Year (FY) 1997 activities and accomplishments of EPA Headquarters, the National Enforcement Investigations Center (NEIC), and Regions in each of these three areas. Key activities and accomplishments are summarized below.

I. EPA Headquarters and NEIC Activities and Accomplishments

Program Development

EPA HQ's CT program development focused on developing an EPA-wide CT strategy, following up on the 1996 Summer Olympics (held in Atlanta, Georgia) and conducting tasks associated with its role as the primary agency for Emergency Support Function (ESF) #10 of the Federal Response Plan (FRP). Activities included:

- ◆ Through the Counter-Terrorism Strategy Workgroup (CTSW), developed a CT strategy for EPA, including a mission statement and both long-term (through FY02) and short-term goals. The workgroup identified key tasks to address these goals and developed a draft workplan for FY98;

- ◆ Developed FY97 “after-action” reports for internal use by the Agency to ensure that EPA learned as much as possible from the significant preparedness activities undertaken in FY96 for the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. Lessons learned and issued raised were analyzed to determine which areas required future work by EPA to resolve;
- ◆ Developed a draft scoping paper describing the process by which CT guidance would be developed for Regional personnel;
- ◆ Identified and summarized Federal Radiological Emergency Response Plan (FRERP) issues to be addressed by the interagency community;
- ◆ Continued to refine and expand EPA’s preparedness and response capabilities with guidance and training for On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) and other preparedness and response personnel. Training sought to incorporate CT awareness into OSC ongoing activities;
- ◆ Developed and provided guidance materials and other assistance to state and local planners/responders, focusing on State Emergency Response Commissions (SERCs) and Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs). EPA placed much of this information on the home page of the Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention Office (CEPPO);
- ◆ Continued to provide guidance, fact sheets, and briefings to other government and private sector entities on EPA’s roles and responsibilities for preparedness and response to WMD terrorist incidents; and
- ◆ Visited the DOE remote sensing laboratory in Las Vegas and the Nevada Test Site to look at equipment and facilities that could possibly be used in developing future EPA NEIC capabilities in this area. NEIC laboratory personnel have also visited a number of equipment manufacturers and facilities, such as the Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland, to talk with designers and operators about the design, construction, and operation of modular laboratories. NEIC personnel also began designing and obtaining equipment, instrumentation, and training for rapid response, assessment, and evidence collection of threatened or actual chemical releases.

Interagency and Intra-Agency Coordination

The majority of EPA Headquarter’s CT activities in FY97 involved participation in the federal-wide CT initiatives. EPA has been participating in several interagency federal groups to ensure the inclusion of the National Response System (NRS) in CT efforts. EPA has also been working to internally improve readiness in the CT arena. An internal coordinating group has been formed to ensure that each of the involved offices — CEPPO, which includes EPA’s Emergency Coordinator, and the Office of Emergency and Remedial Response (OERR) within

OSWER, the Office of Radiation and Indoor Air (ORIA), and NEIC — work together in this area.

In FY97 EPA HQ conducted the following interagency and intra-Agency coordination activities:

- ◆ Provided numerous briefings to both internal and external audiences to ensure that parties understood EPA's role and responsibilities under the National Contingency Plan (NCP) and the implications for Counter-Terrorism activities. Briefings were provided to groups such as the following:
 - FBI Special Agents in Charge (SACs) on the interface of FBI and EPA during a NBC response (e.g., the roles of EPA's Environmental Response Team (ERT) and the NEIC);
 - EPA senior managers (DAA/OWSER, AA/OIA, OSWER senior managers);
 - Superfund removal managers;
 - CEPPPO regional coordinators;
 - Congressional staff on EPA's roles and responsibilities;
 - DoD staff on EPA's roles and responsibilities;
 - Other organizations including Firefighter/Hazmat/Incident Commander Performance Objectives Focus Group; meeting of the American Academy of Emergency Physicians; and
 - Several Regional Response Teams (RRTs III, IV, and V).
- ◆ Participated in numerous inter-agency CT groups such as the Senior Interagency Coordinating Group (SICG), Catastrophic Disaster Response Group, Interagency Core Group, Weapons of Mass Destruction Workgroup, Emergency Support Function Leaders Group, Rapid Response Information Workgroup, FBI's CONPLAN Workgroup, 5-Year CT Training Workgroup, and the Technical Support Workgroup. Key examples of EPA's accomplishments include:
 - In the CONPLAN and SICG meetings, EPA pursued, with the FBI and FEMA, a more detailed and refined Concept of Operations Plan (CONPLAN) for the Crisis and Consequences Management Phases of Response, to improve federal coordination with state and local sectors. EPA succeeded in ensuring that the concept of an integrated command structure using an Incident Command System/Unified Command as the model was incorporated in each;
 - In the interagency Rapid Response Information Workgroup led by FEMA, EPA developed an updated listing of the Agency's response assets and a prioritization for the deployment of these assets. Under the auspices of the SICG, EPA and the workgroup developed an interagency agreement regarding the most efficient and effective way to collect, maintain, and

distribute this information and an action plan that called for the design and development of the database to be completed;

- EPA assisted in the development of the interagency *Strategic Plan for Developing a Weapons of Mass Destruction Domestic Terrorism Preparedness and Response Capability* over a six-month period by reviewing and commenting on draft and final strategy documents, and providing information on current and projected EPA CT activities for the upcoming five years. The plan establishes the guiding principles for achieving an enhanced domestic response capability, including a unified vision, a coherent set of goals and objectives, a fundamental development strategy, and a description of inter-agency roles and responsibilities;
 - For the Technical Support Working Group (TSWG), EPA ranked research and development projects proposed by the TSWG for funding; and
 - EPA arranged for two EPA staff to serve as liaisons (part-time) at FBI Headquarters (EPA is currently awaiting FBI's response).
- ◆ Developed and distributed several fact sheets to other federal agency representatives and state and local responders to clarify EPA's potential role and capabilities for an NBC terrorism incident.
 - ◆ Distributed guidance (a memorandum) to the Regional CT Points-of-Contact describing the suggested types of activities that were to be conducted using the funds allocated for FY97 regional participation in EPA's CT program.
 - ◆ Continued to work closely with other agencies on identifying and resolving significant equipment issues, including equipment shortfalls for state and local responders to train on specialized equipment and to identify research needs for better monitoring equipment.

Training and Exercises

EPA's participation in CT training and exercises was targeted to both federal, state, and local responders. EPA developed its own training and exercises and also participated in exercises sponsored by other governmental entities. The long-term goal is to have counter-terrorism technical training fully incorporated into the EPA preparedness and response training structure and mechanisms. Specifically, EPA:

- ◆ Continued to play a major role in the development of NBC Domestic Preparedness Training Program under NLD. EPA assisted in developing the city visit process and the training itself. EPA also participated in the initial visit in each city.

- ◆ Presented full-day training courses in each of the EPA's 10 Regions for an audience consisting primarily of OSCs and their managers, and also representatives from other EPA Regional response and preparedness offices (e.g., the regional radiation program managers, enforcement staff, and response contractors). In total, 311 students were trained in 10 EPA Regions. A Headquarters version of the OSC/Regional Managers training session was presented to 53 attendees in Washington, D.C., representing EPA's CEPP, OERR, ORIA, Office of General Counsel, Office of Pesticides, Office of International Activities, and Office of Research and Development, as well as representatives from the United States Coast Guard (USCG), National Response Center (NRC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- ◆ Participated as a key member in the development of a Sustainment Training process, in which the emphasis is on: (1) taking advantage of the resources currently available to assist state and local responders, (2) enhancing these resources, (3) evaluating potential resource needs for future activities, and (4) taking steps to address those needs. EPA's goal is to encourage a less "top-down" response hierarchy by promoting its traditional "bottom-up" approach.

II. EPA Regional Activities and Accomplishments

Numerous activities were undertaken by EPA Regional offices in FY97 to promote program development, coordinate interagency and intra-Agency activities and resources, and conduct training/exercises. A synopsis of the key activities of each of the ten regions is beyond the scope of this summary; below are highlighted activities and accomplishments common to most of the regions, as well as additional major accomplishments of a sampling of the regions.

Program Development

EPA Regional program development activities focused on: (1) purchasing or ensuring access to response equipment; (2) applying for security clearances for selected staff; and (3) conducting outreach to SERCs/LEPCs. Recognizing the importance of additional equipment and security clearances, EPA Headquarters allocated specific funds (\$65,000) to each of the regions in FY97. Headquarters also allocated additional funds specifically intended to augment the regions' funds for obtaining security clearances. (The goal is to achieve enough redundancy so that the regions are never without three OSCs and a removal manager with appropriate clearances to address terrorist incidents or federal facility responses where the region may be called to assist or be the OSC.) Most regions have begun or completed the process to obtain additional clearances at the secret- and top-secret level.

Many OSCs in EPA Regions, although trained in the use of Level A protective equipment, have never had the need to use the equipment in an actual response, especially because other resources (e.g., the USCG Strike Teams) have access to such equipment and routinely train in its use. Based on the assessment that significant training for CT response would be prohibitive, some regions have decided that their role in a CT incident would likely be

consistent with their role in a typical hazmat response: coordination of response assets. As a result, they used the funding provided by EPA Headquarters to purchase equipment that would assist in this role: detection equipment necessary to detect chemical agents that might be used in a terrorist event (and which might not be available to the OSC's support forces); communication equipment necessary to ensure that the OSC is able to communicate with his or her responders and with other response commanders; security clearances to allow the OSC to have full access to the scene and to information regarding the event; and additional equipment (such as cameras, weather monitoring equipment, and Level A PPE) that might otherwise not be available to support the OSC.

Several regions also conducted outreach activities to promote coordination among key players (e.g., SERCs/LEPCs and FEMA). As Region 8 prepared for the Oklahoma City Bombing trials and the Summit of Eight, its outreach activities included presentations at both the Annual Colorado LEPC Conference and the National Governors' Association Conference. In addition to these efforts, the Region 8 *News and Views of Chemical Preparedness* newsletter, distributed in the Spring of 1997 to all Region 8 LEPCs, provided an update regarding previous and ongoing CT activities conducted in the region.

To further strengthen CT programs, several regions hosted or attended a conference and provided briefings on CT issues at RRT meetings. In December 1997, Region 3 hosted a Chemical Emergency Prevention and Preparedness Conference in Pittsburgh, where a workshop was held focusing on Counter-Terrorism. Approximately 900 to 1,000 attendees were expected from various state agencies, local agencies, federal agencies, industry, and the public. The region was involved in the planning for this conference throughout FY97. Other regions (e.g., Region 10) met with state representatives individually to increase awareness of CT issues.

Interagency and Intra-Agency Coordination

Several regions have met with staff from federal agencies to discuss their respective roles in CT operations (e.g., Region 1 with FEMA, the FBI, and USCG). Other regions (e.g., Regions 4 and 8) have provided education to the SERCs through the forum provided by the Regional Response Team meetings.

In several cases, regions have made efforts to involve the Radiation Manager on CT issues that could affect the Radiation Program. They are also working with the Regional Incident Coordination Teams and Regional Interagency Steering Committees to implement regional policies where appropriate.

Training and Exercises

Training and exercises represents an integral part of regional activities, especially in those regions planning for upcoming special events. Many regional staff were closely involved with preparing for or attending the "27-Cities" initial visits as part of the NLD Domestic Preparedness Training Program. Usually regions sent at least one representative to each of these meetings (see Appendix D for a list of cities visited in FY97). The most notable level of effort in FY97 was undertaken by EPA Region 8, which developed and provided a training course on counter-

terrorism for first responders. The course was an 8-hour classroom training, focusing on the role of first responders during the initial hours following a chemical or biological terrorist incident, before outside assistance could be realistically expected to arrive. During the period from December 1996 through June 1997, when the last course was conducted, Region 8 trained approximately 500 responders in the “Front Range” area (covering the area from Colorado Springs, Colorado to Cheyenne, Wyoming).

During the predeployment for the Summit of 8, training was provided to a number of Region 8's OSCs on the Incident Command System (ICS) and on the use of EPA's instrumentation. EPA's OSCs were able to cross-train with members of DOE's Nuclear Emergency Search Team (NEST) on ICS and the use of the NEST's instrumentation. Additionally, an in-house training for Region 8 OSCs was developed in preparation for activities during FY97. A one-day Level A training was conducted with the Region's START and ERCS contractors, OSCs, ERT, and USCG Strike Team. Preparations conducted included a one-day full-scale exercise focusing on CT response issues.

Region 9 participated in a one-week CT workshop held in Sacramento in September 1997. The approximately 35 to 50 attendees of these sessions were mainly comprised of first responders at the local and state levels. Several federal agents involved in federal planning were also present. Other regions also obtained or conducted training for its OSCs. In addition to attending the HQ-sponsored training, for instance, a number of regions also participated in exercises conducted at the federal, state, and local levels aimed primarily at clarifying the interactions between roles of the many potential responders to an NBC terrorist incident. Region 1 activities included cooperation with AMTRAK, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, USCG, and a number of other government agencies, in developing a “table top” exercise to practice response to terrorist situations. Fifty-two government agencies (approximately 200 people) participated.

Significant activity in FY97 also occurred in Region 3, which worked with the Pittsburgh FBI and the Region's LEPCs to develop a CT exercise involving a terrorist attack against stationary facilities. The actual exercise is scheduled for December 1997.

The community of Colorado Springs sponsored a series of three table-top drills, beginning during the Fall 1996 and leading up to a full-scale exercise held at the end of FY97. EPA Region 8 participated as a player in the three table-top drills, and served as an evaluator for the full-scale exercise. Over 100 individuals and organizations, consisting primarily of local responders, participated in the series. Included also were representatives from the Office of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, FBI, and FEMA, who participated in selected drills only. The scenarios for the series focused on responses to chemical agents (such as Sarin) and to a conventional bomb.

Other Activities

Several regions were put on alert or responded to actual incidents in FY97, including:

◆ Region 3

Responded to the threat at the B'nai B'rith headquarters in Washington, D.C., after a suspicious-looking package containing a petri dish labeled with the biological anthrax was received by the group's mailroom.

◆ Region 6

Put on alert status during three separate incidents: (1) an individual in Arkansas threatened to set off an explosion using ricin, a biological identification of toxin, (2) an individual threatened to poison the water supply in Roswell, New Mexico on the fourth of July, and (3) an individual threatened to blow up a chemical plant in Houston, Texas. None of these situations went beyond an alert status.

◆ Region 7

Involved in several responses throughout the year that might have had the potential of being CT-related, including several bomb threats and the methamphetamine labs that needed to be decommissioned. Also involved in a response dealing with a nerve agent, in which DOD's Technical Escort Unit assisted.

◆ Region 8

During the Denver Summit of Eight, numerous federal assets including NEIC, responded to the need to identify an unknown substance, which had been strategically placed at one of the Summit venues. NEIC was the only agency with the unique capabilities on hand to positively identify the substance.

III. Conclusion

As discussed in Sections I and II, EPA Headquarters, NEIC, and the regions have successfully conducted numerous activities to enhance program development, facilitate interagency and intra-Agency coordination, and implement training and exercises. EPA Headquarters's CT program development focused on developing an EPA-wide CT strategy, following up on the 1996 Summer Olympics (held in Atlanta, Georgia) and conducting tasks associated with its role as the chair of the National Response Team and the primary agency for ESF #10 of the FRP. The majority of EPA Headquarter's CT activities in FY97 involved participation in the federal-wide CT initiatives, thereby facilitating inter- and intra-Agency coordination. EPA's participation in CT training and exercises was targeted to both federal and state/local responders. EPA developed its own training and exercises and also participated in exercises sponsored by other governmental entities.

Taken together, the EPA Headquarters, NEIC, and regional activities and accomplishments have built a solid foundation for continuing to build a CT program and enhancing rapid response capabilities.